

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

NEWS RELEASE



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Pouch 1148
Nome, AK, 99762
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SUBDISTRICTS 5 AND 6 PINK AND CHUM SALMON OPENINGS

Commercial salmon fishing will reopen for two periods in the Shaktoolik and Unalakleet Subdistricts at 12:00 noon, Thursday, July 5th. Each subdistrict will have one directed chum salmon period and one directed pink salmon opening. In Subdistrict 5, the Shaktoolik Subdistrict, the first opening will be a 12-hour directed pink salmon opening from 12:00 noon to 12:00 midnight July 5th and permit holders will be limited to gillnets with a mesh size of 4 ½ inches or less. On July 6th, there will be a 24-hour opening in the Shaktoolik Subdistrict to target chum salmon from 6:00 p.m. Friday July 6 to 6:00 p.m. Saturday, July 7th; permit holders will be limited to set gillnets with a mesh size of 6 inches or less. In the Unalakleet Subdistrict, there will be a 24-hour opening directed at chum salmon from 12:00 noon July 5th to 12:00 noon July 6th. Permit holders will be restricted to gillnets with a mesh size not greater than 6 inches and commercial fishing during this opening will be confined to the southern half of the Unalakleet Subdistrict. The southern half of the Unalakleet Subdistrict is delineated from the ADF&G regulatory marker near the coastal pond known as "Big Lake" south to the tip of Black Point. Six hours following the closure of this chum salmon opening, there will be a 24-hour directed pink salmon opening encompassing the entire Unalakleet Subdistrict from 6:00 p.m. Friday, July 6th to 6:00 p.m. Saturday, July 7th. During this directed pink salmon opening permit holders are limited to gillnets with a mesh size of 4 ½ inches or less but will be allowed to fish commercial gear from the tip of Black Point north to Junction Creek.

These openings were staggered and chum salmon fishing was confined to the southern half of the Unalakleet Subdistrict to allow some commercial harvest of pink and chum salmon while safeguarding Chinook salmon from being harvested incidentally in commercial set nets. The 24-hour chum salmon openings will also be used to gauge chum salmon run strength and evaluate incidental harvest rates of Chinook salmon in 6-inch mesh gillnet gear. Recent directed commercial pink salmon openings in the Norton Bay, Shaktoolik, and Unalakleet Subdistricts resulted in high incidental catches of chum salmon but no Chinook salmon reported harvested in 4 ½ inch mesh gillnets. This indicates that brief commercial pink salmon openings should have minimal adverse impacts on Chinook salmon subsistence harvests and escapements to the Shaktoolik and Unalakleet River drainages. Conversely, the high incidental harvest of chum salmon in pink salmon gear suggests the chum salmon run to eastern Norton Sound is very late but finally starting to build strength. Strong subsistence catches of chum salmon have also been reported by subsistence users in Shaktoolik and Unalakleet and daily Unalakleet River and Unalakleet Subdistrict marine test fishery catches of chum salmon have doubled over the last two days. Chinook salmon incidentally harvested during these openings will not be purchased by the buyer and must be retained for subsistence purposes. Chinook salmon incidental harvests must

also be recorded in the personal use section of the fish ticket at the time of delivery. Commercial chum and pink salmon catches and incidental Chinook salmon harvests from these openings will be evaluated to determine the timing and extent of subsequent commercial periods.

For any questions regarding fishing please call Fish & Game in Nome at 443-5167 or 1-800-560-2271, or the Unalakleet Fish and Game field office at 624-3921.

Good Luck and Good Fishing.

This has been an announcement by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in Nome.